



MSU Glassen Scholar intern, Brad Popovich, is 6'4" tall and is towered by Phragmites twice his size. Photo: Michelle Vander Haar, USFWS

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW) is a voluntary, cost share assistance program for landowners wishing to improve their property for wildlife. One way landowners along the shoreline in Saginaw Bay have chosen to make a difference is by treating Phragmites (Common Reed). This plant is an invasive species and is decimating wildlife use and human benefits in the Great Lakes and across the country.

The PFW program in the Saginaw Bay Watershed is housed out of the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge and partners with many organizations around the watershed to accomplish its work. Phragmites control is currently conducted in Arenac County, northern Bay County and the west side of Huron County. Difficult decisions have

been made to prioritize areas for treatment. The success we are showing, through landowner engagement and education of management of this species proves we are doing what it takes to make improvements to our Lake Huron shoreline. PFW funds along with annual allocations from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) have allowed the partnership and restoration success to continue to grow. Since 2011 we have treated over 1,500 acres of coastal wetland with just over \$100,000 from PFW, GLRI and \$150,000 in match from partners and landowners.

Our partners, Arenac Conservation District, Bay County - Community Development and Environmental Affairs and Huron Conservation District have been instrumental in the coordination of these efforts. The staff of these organizations donate hundreds of hours to contact landowners, coordinate contractors, complete agreements and reports.

The landowners participating in restoration have been excited to see wildlife in their front yards again. They have been equally, or even more excited, that we have restored their lake view and their recreational access, increased their house value and improved the water quality. These values in many instances are much more important than the wildlife improvements. Research also shows that a healthy environment and good water quality contribute to; cleaner air, less heat hazards, less impact from extreme storms and improved human health with less stress, less asthma, less cancer and more. You can find out more about this relationship here:

https://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/Tools/EcoHealth_RelationshipBrowser/index.html

If you're interested in making similar improvements to your property, please contact Michelle Vander Haar at Michelle_Vanderhaar@fws.gov or 989/777-5930 ext 102.

Lake view after one year of Phragmites treatment.
Photo: Michelle Vander Haar, USFWS

